

January 29, 1978

Dr. Howard C. Goodman
Special Programme for Research
and Training in Tropical Diseases
World Health Organisation
1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland

Dear Howard,

I am generally in warm accord with the planning group report, and would be happy to associate myself with it. I have just a few amendments which I request be noted (if they are not acceptable as consensual revisions).

1. I can of course well understand the goal-orientation but I believe the program will be self-defeating if there is not greater emphasis on more fundamental biological study. This concern is answered in part, but not fully, by the MRDC plans.

2. For example, (page 3), the task forces should endeavor to coopt further members who are not necessarily now working on a tropical disease, but can contribute more basic biological insights. If this is not done, we will see too much more of the same.

3. I concur with the priorities for the diseases listed. But I would add certain viruses, notably yellow fever and new arenaviruses (like Lassa fever) that may again reach global significance. E.G. The exclusion of yellow fever from South Asia is very poorly understood! - I do understand there have been political problems about that.

4. For each organism there should be much greater stress on biology, life cycle, genetic variation and biochemistry!

5. What about coordination with PAHO!

Why is there no one from South America on the planning group?

6. Do you have any more detail about N'dolo? What are the university connections there?

Good luck,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr